

Illustration

MARIELA MONGES ARÉJOLA
(CONTEMPORARY PLASTIC ARTIST)

Being a pupil of Ponciano Cárdenas does not only represent the adherence to technical knowledge, a matrix always present in the work of the teacher, but a deep understanding of the American culture. Then, man appears trying to take refuge in the freedom of a green and humid continent. Luxuriant and diverse, with the perpetual baptism of its impenetrable rivers returning to the traces of Genesis. The relationship of the paintings of Mariela Monges Aréjola, born in Paraguay, with the jubilant nature evidenced in color and diversity, shows in the background an essential communion with the metaphysical sense of human presence. This is transcendence. Ultimately, the abyss shown by her work is a bridge from immanence to nothingness, dragged in its subject to an ignored aftermath. In this facet of her creation there is also alchemy with the creative thinking of Ponciano Cárdenas when the teacher expresses *"America is not color, it is pain."*

The consciousness of being, in its relationship with the abyss, rises in man with the rites and forms of art in order to explain himself in its presence. In this context the creations of the artist ascend majestically, challenging the earthly prison to which the observer's judgment subjects them. They are wings that emerge from a fixed point, pain, which is the eye that contemplates man in his real dimension. And this brings him closer to the magnificence of its presence.

Mariela Monges Aréjola makes man's attempts a necessary absurdity. She disrobes the non-sense that creatively betrays through man and nature. The themes are representations of a search. That is why she expresses *"art relieves me"* and then extends: *"for a long time, I have begun to perceive the meaning of my artistic expressions, the meaning... the true meaning of art... what I have been breathing for so long together with Ponciano Cárdenas. For a long time it haunted my inner self but I could not make it conscious. And yes... inevitably from the depths of my being this reality... that hurts... that disturbs... becomes evident... That absurdity without tomorrow... that question that lately... I almost continuously ask ... what will the meaning of this absurdity be... what for... what is the purpose of this continuous chain of birth and death ... It overwhelms me sometimes... And my painting says so, screaming it desperately... That search of answers invades me un-*



Figure 1. "Kangué I"
Ink on canvas, 70 x 100 cm, 2017



Figure 2. "Searching for answers"
Ink on paper, 35 x 50 cm, 2018

consciously and is the driving force of my days. In each work arises that search, that need, that reality that I recognize and that will accompany me to the end." There is in Mariela Monges Aréjola an American existential identity and purpose, although she believes that life behaves in an absurdity that we are obliged to cross.

Hope could never be withdrawn from existence. It is the impulse that leaves us alive despite the absurdity that emanates from the experience of consciousness. It has been a need that makes us expect a new dawn and to erect gods in despair. It is about sheltering against the inclemency of the weather where man is found. Art became the highest scream to claim itself fragile and precarious. Also to emulate in each act a replica of Genesis.

Each work is unique, just like every man. Before this the artist is astray, exerting the omnipotence of a creation. Art is the supreme attempt to achieve a transcendence that fails to avoid the absurdity of an attempt without tomorrow. The fall to ignominy becomes more painful by the unprejudiced fatality held by everything that beats. By going through history we recognize the most tragic absurdity: the acceptance of this condition by conscienceness. Hope does not stop. And even more absurd, we love despair to maintain utopias.

All our greatest imaginative and spiritual height converges in that desperate need to remain. Not one aspect of human existence is less absurd than another. Neither is art, regardless its high creative content. What governs the consciousness as transcendent is imperceptible to the muteness of the abyss. There is no sense of justice or reward in nature, only a struggle to remain before oblivion in transformation.

Thoughts cannot be categorized as positive or negative, but as inconsequential. They only serve as reference to man for the judgment and the censorship with which he tries in his pain and frustration to deliver an ethical sense to the world that contains him. And this represents the greatest absurdity that led him to the attempt of climbing to inconsistent heights, in which lust and alienation occupied the only possible place that his clairvoyance could occupy: the look to the "other." From the emotion and justice that emanates from his conscience this fact meant the possible meaning, that although did not take him out of the existential absurdity, gave him the transparent consolation in the limit of the acquired wisdom.

Man makes art in the same way that he attends a ritual, for spiritual necessity. He suffers and crawls in precariousness to give birth to each creation. He thinks and executes his pain until he reaches form and an understanding. He avoids considering that his work is part of the whole human absurdity. Art is tinted with that immaculate and praiseworthy absurdity. It emerges in this concept as consciousness does in misfortune. In his works the artist chains his own life. His episodes are conveyed on canvas, clay, pentagram or on a sheet of paper. In the creation he relates his experience in the desperate attempt to transcend in a time superior to matter. It is the torn and laudable cry of conscience before the contemplation of the indolent abyss that he observes. Creation is an impulse, a willingness to witness

the thought that overcomes existential failure. It is not thought of as an absurdity, as life is, but consumed.

This determination to create is the tearing of a conscience that warns us of time and death. Man blinds his eyes to this reality and rushes to absurdity. Could he live differently? Impossible. This alienation preserves his life. Then, this impulse for the absurd confirms him; concealing the wounds and filling him with passion. With this alchemy he rebels to his mortal condition. There is perseverance in this prosecution of the absurd. Everything leads to nothingness and yet the man of art deepens his effort towards it. He knows that the abyss is a scaffold without an executioner he can vilify. In this challenge to execute he is surpassed by vocation so as not to fall into the reality of his conscience, showing that it is an absurdity within a greater and unknown one, cosmic emptiness.

The artist is a geographical point in the diversity of art. He is alone with his primal emotion and this effect makes the work he executes unrepeatable. This represents his extreme freedom. In this position, the impulse of being and the silent absurdity of existence converge. They are the wings of a bird thrown to the futility of reaching the abyss. The artistic thought erected in a work is only a time of freedom. The only freedom, even if it is an absurdity. It is to find a destiny to the thought that abbreviates in the same event. There is no final destination plausible to the need of human consciousness. We are subject to a transformation that is a parenthesis of oblivion.

In this absurdity that the work of art carries, we must also find ultimate freedom, its greatest degree, that of unknown destiny. The excess of emotion with which he conjectured the work finds its maximum freedom in absurdity. In this emotion without tomorrow that emanates from the creator, and in the absurdity of a visceral impulse, the maximum freedom given to the work is its unknown destiny, the superposition of positive and negative thoughts ignored about it. And this gives freedom to the desperate conscience of the artist.

One of Mariela Monges Aréjola's characters I discover evades the stillness in the canvas where it waits for its silent cry to be understood. And then I perceive: *Everything in me could have been before oblivion, death, nothingness. There is sadness and I cannot help it. All its depth has pain but is unable to pierce it. She continues behind my steps with the pale leaves of autumn falling without anyone noticing that everything seems to die and is resurrecting. And I among them break their fragile spines and turn them into tiny, ignored fragments. The wind stops to turn them. It turns them to dust. To ignominy. To the blinded days. There is encouragement in this wait to look at the god who is returning.*

In the last words the artist quotes a phrase by Augusto Roa Bastos (1917-2000), twinned with that Americanism that he defends with his creation together with the School of Ponciano Cárdenas: *"without resurrection of glory as the other, because those barefoot and dark Christs died truly unredeemed, forgotten."*